

who favor 2 weeks of early voting and 83 percent of voters who support public disclosure of campaign contributions because they believe the people should be running the government, not lobbyists and not outside groups, we will take it back again from those who are trying to take away the people's constitutional right to vote.

With 19 States having enacted laws this year to roll back the freedom to vote, we can't simply sit back and watch our democracy be threatened. Whether it be threatened with bear spray, crowbars, axes, or whether it be threatened with long lines, no ballot drop-off boxes, and secret money, we must stand up for our democracy whether we are Democrats or Republicans or Independents. That is what our country is about.

When we are faced with a coordinated effort across our country to limit the freedom to vote, we must stand up and do what is right. But, as we have seen in States like Georgia and Florida and Iowa and Montana and last month in Texas, we are up against a coordinated attack. As Senator Reverend RAPHAEL WARNOCK has said, it is really quite simple: Some people don't want some people to vote. That is what this is about.

What is this Freedom to Vote Act about? It is about minimum standards for voting. You know, it is 15 days of early voting. My State votes up to 40 days. That is not what we put in this bill. We put minimum standards in this bill, ensuring voters have access to at least 2 weeks of early voting so they can cast their mail-in ballot without an excuse—something people were able to use as a way to safely vote in the middle of a public health crisis. They did it in record numbers in the middle of a crisis because they believed in our democracy no matter which way they voted. Why would we take away that right from them now when we are seeing a curtailing of that right in many States across this country?

It counters partisan interference in election administrations, makes sure that these super PACs and issue advocacy groups that hide behind veils have to show who is giving them the money, and prohibits partisan gerrymandering.

Then we listened to secretaries of state across this country, Democrats and Republicans. We listened to our colleague Senator MANCHIN, who proudly has his name on this bill. So what did we do? We made changes to this bill. It provides flexibility for small and vote-by-mail jurisdictions on early voting. It makes it easier to implement automatic voter registration. It creates a new flexible source of Federal funding to help our States. It ensures election officials can use best practices for maintaining accurate and up-to-date voter rolls.

It is important to recognize that the Freedom to Vote Act is the first piece of voting rights legislation this Congress to come to the Senate floor with the support of all 50 Senate Democrats.

Now, our Republican colleagues may not agree with everything in this bill. OK. Then don't be scared. Don't hide behind your desks. Don't deny us the right to simply debate this bill. Our leader, Senator SCHUMER, has made it very clear: We are open to amendments on this bill. We welcome your amendments. We are not putting a limit on amendments.

So why would you shy away from debating this bill—unless you just don't want the American people to hear the truth; unless you don't want the stories told about what is going on in places like Georgia, where voters are now being asked to put their birth date on the outside of the inside envelope. Maybe you don't want to have the stories told about how voters in Wisconsin almost—except for the Governor stopping it in its tracks, voters in Wisconsin almost were limited in the entire city of Milwaukee to one drop-off box. That bill passed their legislature. That is what we are talking about here.

So let's have this debate. Let's hear the argument. Let's not stop the debate over the fundamental right to vote that our entire democracy is founded on.

If our Republican colleagues have constructive ideas on ways to improve this legislation and if they are willing to work with us on amendments, then we are prepared to hear them. We are simply asking them to open up the debate. Instead, it will be more people standing in line, like they did in Wisconsin in the primary, in homemade masks and garbage bags in a rainstorm just to exercise their right to vote. It is going to be people who are told, like they just were in Georgia: You can't even vote on weekends in the runoff period. It is going to be people who served in our military who have to wait in line in the hot Sun, wait for hours to vote. That didn't happen when they signed up to serve our country, but it happens when they try to vote.

Let's have that debate. Americans have fought and died to protect our freedom to vote. They have done so on the battlefield, and they did so in marches during the civil rights movement. Fifty-six years after the Voting Rights Act was passed by this Chamber and signed into law, we cannot shut down the debate.

Our Nation was founded on the ideals of democracy, and we have seen for ourselves in this very building that we can't afford to take that for granted. We can't do it when legislators and Members of Congress get to pick and choose who is going to be able to vote easily. We do it by debating real ideas and standing on the shoulders of those who went out to vote. That is what a democracy is about.

I urge my colleagues to open up the debate, to not be afraid and shut down the debate, to not hide under their desks, to not put their heads down. I urge them to simply open up the debate.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON LHAMON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Lhamon nomination?

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 419 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—50

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50.

The Senate being equally divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative, and the nomination is confirmed.

The nomination was confirmed.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The VICE PRESIDENT. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 125, S. 2747, a bill to expand Americans' access to the ballot box and reduce the influence of big money in politics, and for other purpose.

Charles E. Schumer, Amy Klobuchar, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan,

Raphael G. Warnock, Ben Ray Lujan, Gary C. Peters, Elizabeth Warren, Christopher Murphy, Tammy Duckworth, Patrick J. Leahy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Michael F. Bennet, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin, Cory A. Booker, Sherrod Brown.

The VICE PRESIDENT. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed on S. 2747, a bill to expand Americans' access to the ballot box and reduce the influence of big money in politics, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 420 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Lujan	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Hassan	Padilla	
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—51

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Schumer
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lankford	Shelby
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Cramer	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	Marshall	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Tuberville
Ernst	Murkowski	Wicker
Fischer	Paul	Young

Mr. SCHUMER. I change my vote to no.

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 51.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I enter a motion to reconsider the failed cloture vote.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The motion is entered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Madam President, I want to be clear about what just happened on the floor of the Senate. Every single Republican Senator just blocked this Chamber from having a debate—simply a debate—on protecting Americans' right to vote in free and fair elections.

A little over a year ago, our country held the safest, most accessible, most

on-the-level elections in modern history. Our former President could not accept defeat with grace. He refused to show fidelity to the democratic process.

Instead, he told a Big Lie—a Big Lie that has now poisoned—poisoned—the roots of our democracy. Capitalizing on this malicious lie, his acolytes in conservative-controlled legislatures are now passing laws across the country making it harder for younger, poorer, urban, and non-White Americans to participate in our elections.

These laws are a direct attack on our fundamental liberties as American citizens. If there is anything—anything—worthy of the Senate's attention, it is unquestionably this.

And yet, given the chance to respond to an obvious problem, given the chance to merely debate these latest threats against the franchise, Senate Republicans voted unanimously—unanimously—to block any opportunity for action.

Let there be no mistake, Senate Republicans blocking debate today is an implicit endorsement of the horrid new voter suppression and election subversion laws pushed in conservative States across the country. By preventing the Senate from functioning as it was intended, Republicans in this body are permitting States to criminalize giving food and water to voters at the polls. Republicans are saying it's OK to limit polling places and voting hours and shut the doors to more expansive vote by mail.

I mean, my God. Why aren't all of my colleagues outraged by these laws?

Frankly, we haven't heard a clear explanation from Republicans at all because they refused for this Chamber to even hold a debate. It is ludicrous—ludicrous—for them to simply state that the Federal Government has no role to play here. They should read the Constitution of these United States of America. It precisely empowers Congress to regulate the “times, places, and manners” of holding elections. The Congress—us. Sometimes the Federal Government has been the only recourse when States conspire to shut voters out.

Madam President, the fight to protect our democracy is far from over in the United States Senate. Senate Democrats have made clear that voting rights is not like other issues we deal with in this Chamber. This isn't about regular old politics. It is not just about even regular old policy. It is about protecting the very soul of this Nation, about preserving our identity as a free people who are masters of our own destiny.

Republican obstruction is not a cause for throwing in the towel. As soon as next week, I am prepared to bring the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act here to the floor.

What we saw from Republicans today is not how the Senate is supposed to work. This is supposedly the world's greatest deliberative body, where we

debate, forge compromise, amend, and pass legislation to help the American people. That is the legacy of this great Chamber. The Senate needs to be restored to its rightful status as the world's greatest deliberative body.

Now, in the aftermath of the Civil War, and as the Nation began the colossal work of Reconstruction, America was more divided than at any point in history. It was hard to imagine that a single nation could endure after the bloody conflict of the four previous years.

At the time, the Republican Congress set to work on granting newly freed slaves the basic freedoms that had long been denied to them. These freedoms were eventually enshrined in the 14th and 15th Amendments, granting due process and the right to vote to all citizens, regardless of color or race.

Today, these amendments rank as some of the greatest and most revered accomplishments in congressional history. They are proof that our country is capable of living up to its founding promise, if we are willing to put in the work.

But at the time, the minority party in both Chambers refused to offer a single vote for any of the civil rights legislation put forward during Reconstruction. Not one vote. Not one vote. They argued these bills represented nothing more than the partisan interests of the majority—a power grab, they said, from vengeful northerners.

But that didn't stop the majority. If expanding basic freedoms meant going it alone, that was something they were willing to do. Today, we feel the same way.

To the patriots after the Civil War, this wasn't partisan; it was patriotic. And American democracy is better off today because the patriots in this Chamber at that time were undeterred by minority obstruction. Again, today, we feel the same way.

Today, the question before the Senate is how we will find a path forward on protecting our freedoms in the 21st century.

Members of this body now face a choice. They can follow in the footsteps of our patriotic predecessors in this Chamber, or they can sit by as the fabric of our democracy unravels before our very eyes.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the Lin nomination.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Tana Lin, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The junior Senator from Oklahoma.